

Anamnesis

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Summary: On the anniversary of Lyle Norg's death, Brainiac 5 dreams of his friend. Mild slash. [Brainy/Lyle]

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Archive: Ask, and ye shall receive. Warnings: Character reflection. Very tame slash-specifically, of the m/m variety. If this concept disturbs you, read no further. Rating: PG-13. Fandom: Legion of Super-Heroes, the 30th century, pre-Zero Hour. Yeah, the old continuity. No knowledge of the characters required (this is a mere snippet, after all), but the briefest of metas follows the story for those interested in knowing more. Spoilers: Isn't there a statute of limitations on spoilers? If you know the pre-ZH Legion, you know all this. Summary: On the anniversary of Lyle Norg's death, Brainiac 5 dreams of his friend. Thanks: to Dannel, my Lady Inspiration. Without her, this would never have been written. Disclaimer: All characters property of DC Comics. What I have done with them is mine.

> <br> \*Querl Dox's journal:\*

The Legion flag flew at half-mast today.

It always did on this day, the anniversary of my best friend's death.

Lyle Norg. Invisible Kid. Invisible Kid \*I,\* I should say, now that Jacques Foccart has taken on Lyle's powers and name. I do not begrudge him that; Foccart has earned, and more than earned, his place in the Legion and the right to Lyle's legacy. He is an

honorable man, and a brave one.

But I miss my friend.

Lyle was one of Earth's greatest scientists, even given his age. His discoveries have permeated many levels of ordinary life, though most do not realize it. His most famous discovery, of course, was the invisibility serum that gave him his powers. His powers brought him to the Legion, and thereby into my company.

Our first meeting was not a friendly one. I was Brainiac 5, and he a mere Terran biologist. What could he have to teach me?

As it turned out, a great deal. His science was intuitive and lightning-bolt brilliant, as opposed to my carefully plotted methods. He introduced me to entirely new ways of looking at problems. To this day, asking myself how Lyle would go about solving a given puzzle often helps me clarify a complex situation.

And he became my first and truest friend. On Colu I had none; my heritage alone denied me much social contact, and those I met treated me as a kind of mobile computer. Fair enough, I suppose, since in those days I was very near to being just that.

Lyle taught me what it was to be...human. Ironic, how that word has come to mean so much more than "descended from the people of Terra Sol." He taught me that all science is not test tubes and laboratories; it is the results of that science, and the people those results affect. I have not always been conscientious in obeying that principle.

Nowhere was this ideal more clearly expressed than in Lyle's care of Condo Arlik, a young Terran who had been born with the terrible ability to control chemical reactions. "Terrible" because for the first decade and a half of his life, his power often turned against his own body, causing him great injury. Lyle took on the responsibility of teaching Condo to control his power through the aid of biofeedback techniques and complex compounds of Lyle's own devising. The results of this effort were so remarkable that Condo joined the Legion himself, as Chemical King.

Lyle's gift of life was in no way diminished by Condo's death. Chemical King died saving Earth from the devastation of a nuclear disaster; he used what Lyle had taught him, and taught him well, to save the world of both their births.

Today, as always on the anniversary of Lyle's death, I visited his statue in the memorial chamber at Legion headquarters. Silently, I remembered our friendship and his deeds; aloud, I told him as I do every year: "I miss you, Lyle."

The manner of his death was a horror, all the more so because it happened so suddenly and purposelessly. Lyle was killed by Validus of the Fatal Five, a monstrous abomination of immeasurable strength and no measurable intellect. The monster smashed its way into our headquarters, seeking the robot brain of its master Tharok. Lyle destroyed the brain before Validus reached it, but he paid for his act with his life. I was not there, and perhaps fate was kind in allowing me to escape the vision of my friend, crushed in the monstrosity's fist.

But tonight I will read his journals once again, and celebrate his life.

\*Querl Dox's journal:\*

Perhaps it was simply a dream.

I hope it was not.

Last night, I dreamt of Lyle Norg. Not surprising, perhaps, considering that I spent much of yesterday reminiscing about his life, and our friendship.

I rarely dream. The images tossed forth from my subconscious do not result in the kind of dreamscapes that humans experience. Still, last night I found myself in a place of mists. I remember thinking quite clearly, "I am dreaming." Even while at rest, my mind cannot stop analyzing, investigating, and assessing my surroundings.

I heard footsteps, and then the landscape shifted and I found myself in my own lab, a most familiar setting. But this was my lab of many years before, when I had shared it with-

"Brainy!"

I whirled around to see Lyle there, holding a test tube in one hand and a lab notebook in the other, as if the intervening years had never occurred. He looked the same as I remember: wavy brown hair held back neatly by a headband and clear, intelligent eyes. "Give me a hand with this, would you?"

I took a step forward, and then remembered. "No. You are...gone, and this is a dream."

He sighed, and placed the test tube carefully into a rack. The notebook he laid next to a stack of others on the counter. That task accomplished-for it seemed he was as fastidious in death as he was in life-he turned back to me. "Well, yes. I just thought it might be nice to work together again, that's all."

He took a step toward me, and I-perhaps too wary after dozens of encounters with beings who could read or manipulate minds-stepped back. He sighed again. "Brainy, it's really me. What can I tell you to prove it?"

It sounded like him. Moved like him. Could not be-

"I know. Last night, you were up late reading my old journals. I can't believe you kept all those old things! You were wondering about the 'Ghosts in the Clubhouse' case, right?"

"Y-yes, I was. Lyle, is it really-"

He nodded, then continued. "I'd been tracking a suspected intruder-well, you know all that. Things were about to get nasty when there was this huge hollow boom, and that distraction saved my life. Ferro Lad's statue had fallen all by itself, and no, there hadn't been an earthquake." He shook his head sadly. "Poor Andrew. We hardly had time to know him, before he died. But you were wondering if I

really believed it was his ghost that saved me. The answer is: yes. I believe it was. Because now I know-

He paused, as if realizing he was about to say something he shouldn't. "It doesn't matter. Besides, Brainy, didn't you say you missed me?"

Dream or not, I could not lie. "Yes. I did. I do still. But how can this be?"

"It's a gift, for...a favor I did for someone. Let's just leave it at that, all right?" He came over to me, and this time I let him. "God, it's good to see you again!"

"And...and you." I reached to shake his hand, and he gathered me into an embrace instead. He was as warm as life. Still holding me, he said, "I know you've had a rough time of it. I wish...I could have been there to help you."

I felt the sting of tears in my eyes, and pulled away. "Lyle, please. I need to know. How is this possible? How long will this dream last? Will it occur again?"

"Oh, for pete's sake." He shook me gently, exasperated. "Stop it. I'm here, and it's now, and I don't know. But it \*doesn't matter.\*"

"I'm sorry, I just wanted to know-"

"You always do. But for once in your life, Querl, stop thinking!" And he kissed me.

His lips were gentle and he tasted sweet.

When we broke apart, we were both breathing faster. "Well-" "I-" We both spoke at the same time.

Lyle laughed. "You know what they say about great minds..."

I smiled. "Yes." Then, because it needed to be said: "Lyle, I never had the chance to tell you how much I valued your friendship, before-"

He put a finger over my lips. "But you did. I knew it, every day. And since then. So stop beating yourself up about it." He smiled again, and there was a gleam in his eye. "We have time, but not an eternity. Make up your mind, Brainy. You can keep telling me how bad you feel, or..."

"Definitely 'or.'" I reached for him, and for a long time, there was joy.

Much later, I felt my conscious mind beginning to stir. "Lyle-"

"I know. You have to go. It's okay. Just...take care of yourself, will you?" He brushed a strand of hair out of my face. "Don't make me come after you."

"Would that I could."

There was mist suddenly around us. "Do me a favor, Brainy, and tell Jacques to stop worrying. I think he's doing a great job."

"I will. Farewell, Lyle."

"Be seeing you, Querl."

And I woke.

I felt rested, relaxed...perhaps more than I had been in months, or years. This dream (vision?) had healed a wound I was not previously aware of, and I was stronger for it.

I recall what he wrote in his journal about the "ghost" of Ferro Lad: "Do I owe you thanks again, old friend, across the divide that life cannot pass?"

I believe that I do.

> <br> META

Querl-Querl Dox, aka Brainiac 5 or "Brainy." Legionnaire. Planet of origin: Colu. Super-intelligence and 12th-level reasoning ability. Beyond brilliant, but has occasionally been unfriendly, unemotional in the face of extreme circumstance, and/or insane. But he tries not to be.

Lyle-Lyle Norg, aka Invisible Kid I. Legionnaire. Planet of origin: Earth (Terra). Power of invisibility gained from a serum of his own invention. A genius in the fields of biology and chemistry, and a fine Legion leader. Killed by Validus in Superboy and the Legion of Super-Heroes #203.

Jacques-Jacques Foccart, aka Invisible Kid II. Planet of origin: Earth (Terra). Power of invisibility derived from Lyle Norg's serum. Very concerned with living up to Lyle's legacy. IMO, Lyle would have approved of him.

Condo-Condo Arlik, aka Chemical King. Legionnaire. Planet of origin: Earth (Terra). Able to control chemical reactions-an immensely powerful ability he never developed to its full potential. Killed while absorbing the radiation of a nuclear bomb set by the terrorist Deregion in Superboy and the Legion of Super-Heroes #228.

Andrew-Andrew Nolan, aka Ferro Lad. Planet of origin: Earth (Terra). Could transform his body and clothing into iron (the direct inspiration for Colossus of the X-Men). Died saving Earth's solar system from the Sun-Eater, in Adventure #353.

Note: My favorite line is of course the one I did not write. "Do I owe you thanks again, old friend, across the divide that life cannot pass?" is a direct quote from LSH 59, "Ghosts." Thank you, Paul Levitz.

And "anamnesis" is a fancy word for "memory." Brainy likes them big words.

End  
file.